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John E. Zercher

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Evangelical VISITOR

January 25, 1979

- *Whatever Happened to
the Prayer Meeting?*
- *Four Priceless Gifts
You Can Give Your Church*
- *Vigilia and Culto de Barrio*
- *To Serve the Present Age*
- *New International Version Bible*
- *Vitalizing the Prayer Meeting*

Letters to the editor

It is easy to be in full accord with all the broad social objectives expressed by Ronald J. Sider as he is quoted in "New Call to Peacemaking" (Nov. 10), viz., justice, peace, and the elimination of war, oppression, and poverty.

But in the expression itself the full force of the spirit it calls for is somehow lacking. It seems to be a spirit of social activism which more effectively points up human failure and inadequacy than it does inspire loving acts for the needy. Its zealous call for love for one's enemies is not balanced with a real and present sense of love for fellow Christians.

The cause is valid. But how about the loveless nature of the crusade itself? Can we measure our sense of social righteousness by observing human failure to meet the need? Are we to love our neighbor or conduct a crusade to get other people to? The movement cannot become devoid of the very thing it seeks to make available to the world.

What is the proper spirit of Christian love that should be demonstrated to *both* friends and enemies? Is enduring persecution, holy or righteous as it may be, a demand that one Christian can make upon another? Should we call upon our friends to endure violence to create a world of

nonviolence for our enemies? Is "going to jail, being tortured, and getting martyred" requisite to admission to a world that doesn't do such things? There is a problem somewhere in the presentation of the case. Everyone sees the need and desirability of love and peace. Certainly we should get together and move corporately to achieve it. It seems there would be great benefit in subjecting the whole basic approach to a critical analysis to the end that the effort and method could be of the same spirit as the objective.

Millard Herr

Alta Loma, CA

DISASTER

Tornado rubble, typhoon flood,
quake-shook cities and sliding mud—
nothing of man's material world
makes disaster; it is the swirl
of th' emotions within his heart
that tears his inner world apart.
Material things? They do not feel!
It is the hurt inside that's real.

—Norman A. Wingert

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From the Editor

The church is "active" in our day. Church growth, youth programs, social ministries, and issue-oriented meetings. It is possible to forget that the value of this activism is in direct proportion to the divine power and wisdom which pervades it.

The lead article reminds us of the importance of prayer in the life of the church. One wonders if the analysis of the prayer meeting by the writer is applicable to the Brethren in Christ and if his premise as to the high importance of the prayer meeting is valid—or has the practice of prayer found other forms in our day?

The article on the prayer meeting was brought to the attention of the editor by one of our collage-age members, Christopher Book.

The article on the New International Version, pages 12 and 13, is not intended as an endorsement of this version but an informative account by one closely involved in its production. The writer, J. C. Wenger, is a highly respected Mennonite scholar and teacher and is well-known within Brethren in Christ circles.

The article from MCC (page 5) is not large but it is important. The decreasing percentage of MCC personnel which are coming from supporting constituencies is a matter of concern. Are our people—Brethren in Christ—serving under other agencies or are fewer serving? This would, I believe, justify some study with suggested reasons for what the study reveals.

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Whatever Happened to the Prayer Meeting?

George Verwer

One of God's great men of past years, Samuel Chadwick, taught that Satan's greatest aim was to destroy our prayer lives. Satan is not afraid of prayerless study, prayerless work, or prayerless religion . . . but he will tremble when we pray.

If Chadwick was correct (and hundreds of other great men of God have said similar things), then we are really in trouble. If there is any part of our church life that seems to be in trouble, it is the prayer meeting. In fact, in an increasing number of churches, for all practical purposes, there is no such meeting.

There is no lack of books on prayer, and most pastors preach on prayer once in a while. If there is any doctrine to which we pay only lip service, it has to be the doctrine of prayer. In ministering in thousands of churches over the past twenty-two years in North America and around the world, I have never ceased to be amazed at the neglect of true, heart-felt, corporate prayer. There are some beautiful exceptions, in some countries, but they are few in comparison. I am convinced that another challenge or message on prayer will do little good and that alone has almost kept me from writing this article. The hour has come for us to pray. Let us put the prayer meeting back into the life of our churches. This will take action, discipline and perseverance combined with large amounts of love, patience and spiritual reality. C. S. Lewis said, "We have the tendency to think, but not to act. We have the tendency to feel, but not to act. If we go on thinking and feeling without acting, we soon are unable to act."

Part of my motivation for writing this article came after a weekend of ministry in a church where the mid-

week prayer meeting had been dropped due mainly to lack of interest and attendance. The Holy Spirit worked during that weekend, and during the final meeting on Sunday evening the pastor announced that they would start the prayer meeting again on the following Wednesday night. Afterwards I heard that some fifty people attended and that they had a great time of prayer. The fact that some churches have good, live and powerful meetings even in this activist, leisure-loving, television age is proof that your church can as well.

Other Christians tell me that they wish their church had a good, live prayer meeting. Many have stopped going to dead, poorly organized prayer meetings while others continue only with a sense of duty or guilt. Should we not be drawn into the presence of the Living God with higher motivation than this? Why are we only attracted by special speakers and programs rather than the Lord Himself? On a practical level what real authority does the Lord Jesus have in our churches today?

Suggestions for vital prayer meetings, given by the author, will be found on page fourteen of this issue.

To see things change it will take both a spiritual and practical revolution. We need a divine combination of practical changes and deeper commitment. Pastors spend hours to prepare for a sermon, but how much time is put into preparing for the prayer meetings? Linked with this is the great compromise of changing the prayer meeting to "a mid-week service" or "prayer and Bible study" which, after the Bible study and "requests," involves usually about ten to twenty minutes of actual prayer. I guess some feel this is better than nothing, but many decide that "nothing" is better and so they decide not to attend.

Some really live churches with which I have had contact have prayer and Bible study on different nights in order to give enough time for both. Others have them together, but have the meeting long enough to have at least a good hour of prayer. Some have other prayer meetings in different homes and this is often good, though often there is more fellowship than prayer, and they especially seem to lack reality in the area of intercession. These good functions should not take the place of at least one good church prayer meeting a week when a *large* part of the congregation is together in "one accord and unity" as in the book of Acts.

The lack and neglect of such meetings, I believe, are two of the great mistakes in our Bible-believing churches, and such deception by Satan represents a far greater enemy than liberalism or the cults. In fact, a clear study of 2 Corinthians 10:4-7 would show us that prayer is the main way we are going to stand against the enemy in whatever way he might attack us. We seem to be blind to the nature of the spiritual warfare and feel that as long as we had a full Sunday school and good numbers on Sunday morning, we are okay. Could it be as in Revelation 3:1 that we have a name that we are alive but are in fact dead? Could it be true, as one man said, that if the Holy Spirit left us, there would be very few changes made? Everything would go on as usual?

We should be willing to do about anything to keep from such a deadly state. I feel it is almost too late in some places where spiritual schizophrenia has set in on such a deep level. This will be changed only by radical, deep-rooted repentance. Surely the prayer meeting and our personal prayer lives must be a vital part in anything lasting and real that takes place. Let us bring the prayer meeting back into its rightful place in the life of the church AND let us put Christ back in his rightful place as Lord of our lives.

The battle will be uphill all the way for, as Hallesby says in his great book on prayer, "prayer is work." However, the results will be great and eternal.

The writer is founder and International Director of Operation Mobilization. His home is in England.

Four Priceless Gifts You Can

Win Arn

A growing number of people are finding their church to be a spiritual reservoir of renewal and strength, a reference that gives their lives focus, balance, direction, and hope. They look to their church as a place that provides spiritual and moral training for their children, a caring group of Christian friends, corporate worship experience, plus an opportunity for meaningful service.

It is also a widely held, and generally accurate, belief that practicing Christians are better able to cope with personal problems of life through a strong faith, nurtured through their church. Ask any involved and "alive" Christian what their church means to them and they will easily recite the benefits of being an active member in their congregation.

During his 1960 inaugural address, John Kennedy struck a responsive cord in the nation's conscience when he declared, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." However, few Christians involved in their local church have seriously considered the religious paraphrase to that statement . . . "Ask not what your church can do for you, but ask what you can do for Christ and your church." Here are four important gifts you can give your church in appreciation for what Christ and your church have given to you.

Discover and use your Spiritual Gifts—The New Testament is clear in its teaching that ". . . each of us has been given his gift, his due portion of Christ's bounty . . . 'He gave gifts to men' . . . to equip God's people for work in His service, to build up the Body of Christ." (Eph. 4:7-13, NEB) Paul also says, "I would not have you ignorant of spiritual gifts." (I Cor. 12:1), and Peter reiterates that every

Christian has received a gift (I Peter 4:10). To take seriously this Biblical concept of each Christian as a unique, contributing member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5), could set in motion a "spiritual revolution" in your church that would bring an outpouring of God's blessing through new growth and vitality.

As one who has served as a "mid-wife" in seeing scores of churches come alive in new growth and outreach, I know that when those in a congregation identify and apply their gifts, the whole body grows. But the opposite is also true, that a congregation which allows its members to be "unemployed" in using their gifts, will decline and eventually perish. What is true of the congregation is also true of the individual. A person who has found, and is using his unique gift is productive, fulfilled, and contributing to body growth and development. The individual not using his gift will be spiritually frustrated and seldom experience real growth and development.

As more and more individuals identify their gifts, have them confirmed by others in the congregation, and apply their uniqueness in service, the church is immeasurably enriched and strengthened.

Influence your "web" of friends and relatives—Imagine your church being a large water tank, from the bottom of which a one-inch pipe is always flowing. People leave through this "pipe" in your church by death, by transferring out, and by re-version (falling away through indifference.) In some denominations the policy used to be to move ministers every year. Now the ministers stay . . . the people are moving! In the average American congregation 40% to 60% of the members have changed residence, and therefore churches, in the last 3 years. To replace and add to our water tank we must have a 2-inch pipe flowing in the top.

How do people come into a relationship with Christ and the church?

I have asked that question to over 8,000 people throughout America in the last 2 years. The results have been strikingly consistent:

- 4-6% of those surveyed indicated that they were "walk-ins." One Sunday they visited, stayed, and are now a part of that congregation. (Usually in their background there is some identification with the denomination of the church they walked into.)
- 6-8% listed the "minister" as the reason they are now in Christ and that church.
- 2-4% listed the church program as the major factor . . . perhaps a young singles group, a recreation program, or a special interest group.
- 1-2% listed "visitation." Someone called and because of that they are now part of that fellowship.
- 3-6% indicated the Sunday school as the major reason.
- .0001% listed some evangelistic crusade or television program.
- 70-90% listed the reason they came to Christ and their church as being friends or relatives.

The fact is clear . . . church growth is related to present members influencing their friends and relatives. Since Biblical days the church has grown most effectively through natural "webs" . . . people with some social or family ties to each other. Within this group of friends and relatives, a person's ability to influence is far greater than outside the "web."

But why influence one's friends and relatives for Christ and the Church? We do it in obedience to Christ's command to "go and make disciples," and because of a loving concern for those close to us to know the joy and

The writer is president of The Institute for American Church Growth.

Give Your Church

fullness of life in Christ and the Body. Influencing your friends and relatives for Christ is the second precious gift you can give your church.

Keep your circle open—In every church—regardless of size—visitors and new members must be assimilated into the congregation if they are to become an active and contributing part of that congregation. This is most effectively done by incorporating them into a small group—a fellowship circle, task group, Bible study, etc.—where they are known personally, know others personally, and feel a sense of belonging.

While most would agree in theory to this principle, there is a marked tendency in practice for such groups to close themselves off to others, especially “newcomers.” Churches may consider themselves to be quite friendly, but many times this friendliness is shown more to one another than it is to the “stranger.”

In my own experience, I vividly recall being an “X” in a congregation. An “X” is one who is a member of the church, but not integrated into any small group. I first tried one group and then another. While I was told I was welcome, I didn’t feel that I “fit.” In this particular congregation of people with Swedish backgrounds, the Johnson’s, the Svenson’s, the Larson’s, the Olson’s, all seemed to fit; but the Schmidt’s, the DiGiulio’s, the Garcia’s, and the Arn’s were unable to “integrate.” Following the worship service the Swedes hugged each other, greeted each other . . . in Swedish . . . and went out to eat Smorgasbord together. But no one hugged me or spoke Swedish to me or invited me to the Smorgasbord. Soon, like any “X” in a congregation, I drifted out the back door.

There is little value of a church reaching out to others if those who are won are not integrated into the congregation. Give a third priceless gift to

your church by keeping your circles open and encouraging other circles to be open to these new people.

Keep before you a vision of the possibilities—In a survey of pastors the question was asked, “What is your greatest desire for your church?” The answer that appeared more than any other was: “For the lay people to have a vision for growth and to be involved in the process.”

Perhaps the greatest discouragement a pastor faces is a congregation without vision: self-centered, self-satisfied, self-occupied. In board and committee decision making, there is the natural tendency for a church group to take the “safe way,” which usually translates into little risk, little venture, and little vision.

Many congregations have inadvertently organized themselves on a “problem base.” “Where will we find enough Sunday School teachers?” “How will we pay the bills?” “Can we keep the doors open another year?” The problems are endless, the solutions tedious, and the service often joyless.

A far stronger and more effective base is to organize the church and its components around vision and possibilities. In the ministry area of every congregation there are numerous opportunities for effective ministry. These opportunities can be seen and seized. One denomination encourages all of its churches to have a “needs committee”—a group of people actively looking for needs to be met in their community, opportunities to be seized, and ministries to be extended.

Seeing possibilities usually begins with one person, then spreads to others. Being that person in a congregation is the fourth priceless gift you can give your church.

“I will build my Church,” said Jesus. We become builders with Him by giving our gifts.

MCC Needs

Brethren in Christ

At the end of 1978 Mennonite Central Committee has 735 people in service. About the same total has been in service at year’s end the past three years. Although the overall picture is fairly constant, an increasing number of volunteers come from outside the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ constituency. At present 22 per cent of those in service are nonconstituents, the highest percentage in MCC’s history.

“The quality and Christian commitment of volunteers both constituent and non-constituent continues to be excellent and for that we are thankful,” says Personnel Services Director Lowell Detweiler. “But we are concerned that the number of constituent volunteers who are the core of the MCC program does not continue to drop.”

The decreased number of constituents in service reflects the decline in applications coming from constituents. Four years ago the constituency contributed 70 per cent of the applicants whereas in 1978 that number was down to 58 per cent.

MCC hopes to place 300 volunteers in 1979. The largest number of requests are for agriculturists and teachers.

“We are deeply appreciative of material aid and financial support from our constituency,” says Reg Toews, MCC associate executive secretary, “but unless we have sufficient qualified personnel we are unable to effectively use those other resources.”

Religious News

Bibles for Russians

The Russian delegation which attended Mennonite World Conference sessions in Wichita last July returned home with 12 suitcases filled with Bibles, concordances, commentaries and song books in German and Russian. Resources to purchase the books—and suitcases—came from a special offering at World Conference and other groups, including MCC (Canada).

The large number of books contributed to 700 kg. of excess baggage for the six-member delegation for an equivalent cost of \$6,706. But, through some unexplained reason, Aeroflot—the Soviet airline—did not charge a penny.

Incredible. Not only were the books—long banned in the Soviet Union—allowed into the country without a hitch but their passage was subsidized! Will the east-west thaw produce a flood that will overwhelm even the most sceptical?

—Mennonite Reporter

Gideons Present 200 Millionth Copy Of Bible to President Carter

The president of Gideons International, R. Don Efird, a businessman from Kannapolis, North Carolina, and Gideons Executive Director, M. A. Henderson, presented the 200-millionth copy of a Gideon Bible to President Jimmy Carter here.



R. Don Efird, president of Gideons International, presents 200 millionth Gideon Scripture to President Jimmy Carter as M.A. Henderson, executive director and Senator Jim Sasser look on.

Efird, president of a construction firm, and Henderson, who heads the international organization with offices in Nashville, made the presentation during a private audience with President Carter in the oval room of the White House.

During the eight-minute visit with the President, Efird stated that The Gideons, an organization of 58,000 members in 117 countries, distribute about one million copies of the Scripture every 17 days in hotel guest rooms, hospitals, penal institutions, to armed forces personnel, college students and nurses.

A Spanish language Testament also was presented to the President. In response, Mr. Carter told the two Gideons representatives that he especially appreciated this because each night either he or Mrs. Carter reads a chapter from the Spanish Bible.

The President also said that he was well acquainted with the work of Gideons International in distributing the Scriptures and appreciative of what they do.

The two Gideons were accompanied to the White House for the presentation by Sen. James R. Sasser of Tennessee.

Native Americans and Christianity

Nearly one out of every two Native Americans is currently a member of the Christian community. This finding is one of many revealed in the latest survey completed among the Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo peoples of North America.

The survey was conducted by Dr. R. Pierce Beaver, noted missions historian and professor emeritus of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

The survey projects the Indian, Aleut and Eskimo Christian community in the United States to be approximately 320,000—43 percent of the total Native American population of 663,500. The Christian community includes 88,000 regularly attending Protestants, 20,000 in the Orthodox church, and 177,000 baptized Roman Catholics.

The most significant trend noted among the Native American church, according to Beaver, "is that the beginning of the end of the long colonial, subject status of the Native American churches appears to be in sight."

"Spaniard, Englishman, other Europeans, the Frenchman to a less degree, and the American before and after independence, all conquered the Indian, subjugated him and colonized him culturally, ecclesiastically, as well as politically," Beaver says.

Beaver is presently visiting professor of Mission Historiography in the School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Spain Formally Adopts Constitutional Democracy

Spain has formally adopted a constitutional democracy. Official results of the Dec. 6 national referendum on a new constitution, designed to establish "an advanced democratic society" and "a just social and economic order," showed that 15.7 million Spaniards, or 58 per cent of the electorate of 26.8 million, voted yes. About 1.4 million voted no. Many did not vote.

The new charter, which marks a formal, legal rupture with the 40-year-old authoritarian Franco era, establishes a parliamentary democracy under King Juan Carlos, separates church from state, grants a degree of regional autonomy (Basque provinces, Andalusia), abolishes the death penalty, and lowers the age of majority to 18. It also guarantees basic human rights and political, religious, and social freedom.

Abrogating, in effect, a declaration in the 1953 Concordat between the Vatican and the Franco regime that Catholicism was the state religion, the new charter declares that no religion in Spain has "state character." It says, however, that the government will "keep in mind the religious beliefs of Spanish society and will maintain the resulting cooperative

relationships with the Catholic Church and other faiths."

High Schools' Outstanding Students Support Religion, Moral Values

The nation's outstanding teenagers "are keen on religion and maintain traditional moral values," according to results of the Ninth National Opinion Survey of Who's Who Among American High School Students.

The survey showed that 92 per cent of student leaders believe there is a personal God or "vital force" in the world, 90 per cent said religion plays a significant role in their own moral standards and actions, 81 per cent belong to an organized religion, and 62 per cent attend services weekly.

Of the 318,000 "high achievers" featured in the 1978 edition of Who's Who, 50,000 students whose biographies were received by July 1, 1978, were sent survey forms and some 21,500 returned the questionnaires. These 21,500 responses formed the base of the Ninth National Opinion Survey.

Billy Graham Crusade is Largest Christian Gathering in Singapore

The largest Christian gathering ever held here occurred during the Billy Graham Crusade. Over 75,000 persons—10,000 over the capacity seating at National Stadium—packed the closing service of the five-day crusade in this island city-state of 2.3 million, of whom 6 per cent are Christian (75,000 each Protestant and Catholic). Cumulatively, 337,000 attended and 19,631 made decisions for Christ; of those, over 11,000 are 16 to 29 years old.

Mr. Graham stressed that nothing can give real meaning to life except repentance and accepting Christ as personal Savior. His words were translated by Peter Yap into Mandarin Chinese, with gestures as vivid as the evangelist's. The words were also translated in 8500 earphones into Cantonese, Hokkien (Chinese), Malay (Malaysian), Tamil (Indian), and Indonesian.

LWF Leader: Underground Evangelism Not Needed in Eastern Europe

Dr. Robert S. Denny, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, has asserted that "underground" methods of evangelism are not necessary in Eastern Europe.

Reporting to the annual meeting of the BWA Executive Committee, Dr. Denny said he had been able to preach on evangelistic themes and to invite converts to make professions of faith during a visit to East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union in October.

"Forget what you read about the necessity for underground evangelism," he said. "We now have the opportunity for above-ground evangelism in Eastern Europe."

Dr. Denny said the Baptist Union of the USSR has been given government permission to import 25,000 Bibles and 5,000 concordances, and asserted that "there is no need to smuggle Bibles into Eastern Europe. Our problem is to find money to pay for those that we have permission to import."

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Church News

Allegheny

The Sunday evening service on Christmas eve for the **Air Hill** congregation consisted of a Christmas Candle Lighting Service. • A one-day Bible Conference was held by the **Big Valley** congregation on Sunday, Dec. 10, with messages brought by **Barry Parthemer, Jess Bawel, Carl Ament, Abe Yoder, Jr.,** and the pastor, **John Rosenberry.** • The youth of the **Carlisle** congregation sponsored a spaghetti supper on Saturday evening, Dec. 9 to raise funds to send 14 of their young people to Let Youth Begin. • The **Cedar Grove** congregation sponsored "Another Step Forward" during the week of November 20-24. As a conclusion of the effort, more than \$92,000 has been received. • At a baptismal service on Sunday evening, Dec. 3, the rite of Christian baptism was given to 10 young people at the **Chambersburg** church by the pastor, A. Graybill Brubaker.

The **Dillsburg** congregation contributed canned goods, fruit, and cookies and other unperishable food items, along with money, from which Christmas baskets were prepared for distribution. • The **Fairview** Brethren in Christ Church, near New Cumberland, Pa., had as the evangelist for Oct. 25-Nov. 5, Rev. Tony Bane. The Watch Night Service by the congregation was observed with guest speakers, **Richard Gordon, Lewis Byer, and Daniel Keller,** participating. • The congregational Christmas dinner of the **Five Forks** church was held on Sunday evening, Dec. 10. On this same date there was a dedication of children in the Sunday morning service.

The Chancel Choir of the **Grantham** congregation presented the Christmas musical "His Love Reaching" at the Sunday evening service on December 10. **Lois Paine** accompanied the choir on the organ, **Jan Hess** on the piano. The soloists included **Gail Ryan, Andi Wingert, Heidi Reese** and **Bob DeDea.** Pastor **Merle Brubaker** served as narrator. **Amos and Nellie Dick** of the Grantham congregation celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on December 20. Of these 62 years, they have spent 52 years in the ministry, 45 of which were



Ladies of Free Grace Congregation Active

The ladies of the Free Grace Congregation meet as the Willing Hands Sewing Circle, usually monthly for prayer, sewing, and fellowship.

Two members, who use their gifts and time to further the circle are Mazie Cutman and Grace Lenker.

Mazie, who celebrated her 77th birthday November 3, has a special gift and interest in making dresses which she makes available to the church for distribution to

spent as missionaries in India. They are now retired, living in Grantham, Pa. • Stanley Celmar was the guest speaker at both the morning and evening services of the **Marlyn Avenue** (Baltimore) congregation on Sunday, Nov. 26.

Bill Casey, of the Marlyn congregation has been granted a lay ministers license. • "Night of Miracles" by John W. Peterson, was presented as a Christmas canata at the Sunday evening service of the **Martinburg** congregation on December 24.

The Sunday evening service of Dec. 3 of the **Mt. Holly Springs** congregation was taped and sent to **Ken and Hazel Winger.** • A Family Emphasis Weekend was provided by the **Mt. Rock** congregation on Nov. 18 and 19. The guest speaker at the Saturday evening banquet was **John Arthur Brubaker,** Director of the denomination's Christian Education. • **Phyllis Engle** and **John Snyder** who have returned to the States after terms of service in Africa were guest speakers at the **Mowersville** congregation on Sunday evening, Dec. 17. The service that evening was an official welcome service for the new families of the congregation who had begun attending and fellowshipping with the congregation in 1978. A total of 33 persons were in that group. • Part of the Christmas observance of the **South Mountain Chapel** was the presentation of a cantata entitled, "What Child is This?"

Atlantic

The pastors of the **Lancaster County Brethren in Christ** congregations purchased space in the Lancaster newspapers commending store managers in the Lancaster area who chose to remain closed on Sunday. • The **Cross Roads** congregation sponsored a live outdoor nativity scene during the Christmas season, Dec. 21-23, from 7-9 P.M. each evening. The scene was staffed by youth of the congregation. • Sunday, Dec. 10, was the occasion for the first service of worship and fellowship in the new church facilities of the **Elizabethtown** congregation. The congregation met in the church at Hanover and Arch Streets for a concluding service in the old church and then moved by caravan to their new church on East High Street.

Dale and Erma Ulery were guest speakers to page eleven



persons in need. In spite of arthritis she made 120 dresses last winter. She, along with some of these 120 dresses, appear in the photo above.

Grace has for many years made quilt tops and comforters for use by the circle. She also serves as the contact person for the Messiah Village Auxiliary. She is pictured above with her tools of the trade—needle and thread and sewing machine.

Mennonite Word Conference

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Lombard, IL 60148

The following items are available from the Lombard office through The Christian Light Bookstores.

International Songbook

—Compilation of 63 songs from five continents, \$3.95.

Mennonite World Handbook

—Essays, and descriptive articles regarding Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conferences around the world, \$6.25.

Mennonite World Membership Map

—Three color, 22" x 34" world map listing Mennonite and Brethren in Christ membership by nations, \$1.25.

Vigilia and Culto de Barrio

Chuck Musser

Some time ago I heard about an Executive Secretary of a main-line denominational mission board who with much enjoyment visited for the first time his church's Latin American mission work in Peru. Enthusiastically he returned home to the United States to report how God's work was prospering on the mission field.

The thing that impressed him most was "how at home" he felt while attending worship services in this foreign country. The songs sung were the same as those old familiar hymns used in North America. The order and content of service was such that he could guess what was coming next. All this in spite of the fact that he could not understand the language. It was as though he were worshipping in his home church, only in a different language.

What a tragedy!

God calls foreign missionaries to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ, not disciples of the North American worship experience. Making disciples of Jesus Christ will mean establishing churches whose members can worship God in terms that are meaningful to their indigenous culture. The indigenous church herself, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, should sort out those foreign influences which have little or no spiritual meaning in her worship experience. In turn, the church will then want to assimilate meaningful foreign influences with influences peculiar to her own culture which when combined will give the Christian a pattern of worship that truly brings him into the presence of God—a pattern of worship that truly enhances spiritual growth—a pattern of worship that is conducive to church growth.

As a North American missionary to the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua, it has been interesting to observe those worship patterns which are unique to the Nicaraguan culture, patterns which are rarely if ever practiced in North America.

The writer is serving in Nicaragua under appointment by Brethren in Christ Board for Missions.

Two practices of worship that are common in the Nicaraguan Evangelical scene are the "vigilia" and the "culto de barrio."

Vigilia

"Vigilia" is Spanish for "watch night service." A "vigilia" may terminate anywhere from between 12:00 to 5 o'clock in the morning. The later the hour the better (that is speaking from the Nicaraguan point of view).

A "vigilia" can be planned for any number of reasons. Parents who wish to thank the Lord for their child's first birthday will plan a "vigilia." Parents will hold a "vigilia" for their daughter now a "senorita" celebrating her fifteenth birthday, the age in Latin America when a girl becomes a woman. Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Independence Day, or any other national holiday for that matter, are all favorable opportunities to plan a watch night service. Another time which is a must for a "vigilia" is the concluding night of a week of evangelistic services.

These watch night services are patterned after a normal worship service. But instead of having just one service, one has two or three, depending upon the hour to which one wants to go. If it is to be an all night service, a full meal is served at midnight; whereas if the service is to end early (say between 12:00 and 1:00) only coffee and bread are served.

No matter what the occasion for having a "vigilia," three goals dominate each service: worship, spiritual growth, and evangelism.

Why the "vigilia" is so popular in the Nicaraguan Evangelical worship experience is not certain. It is not a practice common to all Latin America. When a Honduran Evangelical was asked whether or not the Church has "vigilias" in his country he replied, "What is a 'vigilia'?"

It seems to some extent that the watch night service fulfills an important need in the social life of the Nicaraguan evangelical. On becoming a Christian one is called to give up

worldly associations and entertainments. One of these entertainments is the the all-night fiesta where drinking and dancing are the main attractions. It is interesting to observe that these all-night fiestas are held for many of the same reasons mentioned above for a watch night service.

Take for example the celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday. In Latin America, fifteen is the age when a girl becomes a "senorita." It is an age in which she can legally be married without parental permission. To celebrate this important passage in a daughter's life, parents honor her with an all-night fiesta. In such a setting drinking and dancing are the entertainments, evangelical parents are excluded from this form of celebration.

Thus it would appear that the worldly fiesta has been converted into a God-oriented event, in the form of a watch night service, in order to provide much needed social intercourse for the Nicaraguan evangelical. Using the example of a girl becoming a "senorita," we can see this clearly. Evangelical parents also wish to commemorate the coming of age of their daughters. So instead of having an all-night fiesta in their home they consult their pastor about a "vigilia" in the church. And although the "senorita" does not necessarily take an active part in the watch night service, all persons present know that it is held in her honor and that the meal served at midnight was bought and prepared by the celebrant's parents.

Culto de barrio

The second practice which is peculiar to the Nicaraguan Evangelical Church scene is the "culto de barrio" or house service. It is not a neighborhood Bible study nor a prayer meeting. But just as the name implies it is a normal worship service, such as experienced in a church, held in a home.

The house is preferably that of an unsaved neighbor who agrees to let his evangelical friends have a service in his

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

COVENANT

A Financial and Estate Planning Newsletter for Christian Stewards



Vol. 1, No. 2

—U.S.A.—

Winter, 1978

NEW DIMENSIONS IN GIVING

Christians in North America today enjoy greater affluence than ever before. No other people in history have been entrusted with so many material blessings.

But this privilege does *not* come without responsibility. For everything we possess is a gift

we might do well to re-examine our attitudes with regard to this point.

For it is in recognition of the *good* that is accomplished by the Church, its agencies and other non-profit organizations that Congress has written such generous incentives into the Internal Revenue Code. It encourages such support.

potential does *not* consist in tax dodging but, rather, in the recognition of which the Lord has provided fulfillment of our obligation of activeness.

to acquaint you with some of the methods currently available and the various methods of giving and the pros and cons of each option.

This information is to help you — that is, giving through various means — can enable you to support the Kingdom because it

Our counsel with you should be the result of an interview.

CONCLUSIONS

Fundamental to all giving is the support of the local church and its ministries through regular and systematic contributions from income. In addition, there may be special blessings received from the hands of our Heavenly Father — such as a good crop, an extra commission, an unexpected order, an unusually successful year, etc. — which present an opportunity for us to respond to His loving kindness with a special gift for the work of His kingdom.

Introducing the 1978 Winter Issue of

COVENANT

A Financial and Estate Planning Newsletter for Christian Stewards

In our complex twentieth century, giving — especially larger contributions — to advance Christ's mission in the world may no longer be as simple as dropping an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

Good stewardship demands that we use the resources entrusted into our care to the greatest possible advantage. The scope of this responsibility encompasses the manner in which we apply our God-given possessions to meet individual and family needs, as well as the way in which we contribute to the work of the Kingdom. Unfortunately, taxwise giving is often an overlooked consideration.

While there are numerous means of supporting the cause of Christ through which advantageous tax results can be obtained — under the triumverate of the federal tax structure; that is, the income, estate and gift tax — too few people realize the full extent of these potential benefits.

- over -

While most Christians are earnestly endeavoring to carry out this stewardship responsibility — in grateful and obedient response to Christ's redeeming love — substantial resources are often lost because they do *not* take advantage of the many tax-saving provisions that are part of our current tax legislation.

And even though some individuals shy away from tax reduction as a legitimate objective in giving,

Tax Savings

Income Taxes

Capital Gains

Estate Taxes

When making cash contributions, you may donate up to 50% of your adjusted gross income and still deduct the *entire* amount on your federal income tax return. If your cash contributions exceed the 50% limitation, you may carry the excess forward for up to five subsequent years, or until it is all deducted, whichever occurs first.

EXAMPLE — Alvin is the proprietor of a growing business. His income is taxed at the rate of 30%. Alvin is considering a special year-end gift of \$5,000 for debt retirement at the congregation that has nurtured him for 15 years. If he completes the gift, what will it actually cost him?

By giving a check to the local treasurer before December 31st, Alvin will not only experience the joy that comes with giving, but a definite tax advantage as well. Specifically, the amount he will owe for income taxes next April 15th will be reduced by \$1,500 ($\$5,000 \times 30\%$).

While the church will benefit by the full value of his special gift, Alvin's tax-saving donation will only cost him \$3,500 ($\$5,000$ less \$1,500).

2. MARKETABLE SECURITIES

If you are one of the more than 32 million Americans who own marketable securities, it may be to your advantage to transfer a portion of your portfolio directly to the Church or one of its agencies rather than first converting it to cash . . . especially if you have owned the stock for more than twelve months and it has appreciated, or gone up, in value.⁷⁻⁸ Contributions of this nature offer dual tax benefits:⁹

- *First*, you are allowed a charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the securities rather than your lower cost.
- *And second*, you can completely eliminate the capital gains tax on the stock's appreciation.

Gifts of appreciated securities qualify for a charitable deduction of up to 30% of your adjusted gross income. Any unused deduction may be carried over for up to five succeeding years.¹⁰

EXAMPLE — Bill and Barbara have just donated 200 shares of growth securities to the Jacob Engle Foundation to help offset the legal and administrative expenses incurred in bringing the Brotherhood Loan Fund into full compliance with federal and state regulations.

While they only paid \$4,500 for their investment several years ago, it is now selling for \$32.50 per share (for a total value of \$6,500). What are the tax benefits of their generous gift, assuming they are taxed at the rate of 40%?

Bill and Barbara are allowed to deduct the current fair market value of their gift as a charitable contribution, thus lowering their income taxes by \$2,600 ($\$6,500 \times 40\%$). They also bypass the capital gains tax of \$400 they would have incurred had they sold the stock.

As a result of this \$3,000 tax savings (\$2,600 plus \$400), their actual out-of-pocket cost for making this substantial gift to the Jacob Engle Foundation is only \$1,500 ($\$4,500$ —the cost of the original investment—less \$3,000).

3. REAL ESTATE

Another very practical way of contributing to Christ's cause and kingdom at the same time you are exercising good stewardship of your material blessings is to deed land, houses, farms or business property to the Church.

Here again, if you have owned the property for more than twelve months and it has gone up in value, you are entitled to a charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the transfer.⁷⁻⁸ In addition, you avoid capital gains tax on the property's appreciation.⁹

While the charitable deduction for gifts of real estate is limited to 30% of your adjusted gross income in the year of the contribution, you still have the privilege of carrying any unused deduction over for up to five subsequent years.¹⁰

EXAMPLE — Charles and Cynthia have recently retired and live on a fixed income. Because they wanted to make a special

gift to the Board for Missions but could not afford a major cash contribution, they donated some undeveloped land they owned in an area that was under consideration for a church planting project. The land, purchased eight years ago for \$6,000, has now tripled in value ($\$6,000 \times 3 = \$18,000$). What are the tax implications of their thoughtful gift?

Charles and Cynthia will receive full credit for the current fair market value of their generous contribution. These major deductions will substantially lower their taxable income over the next several years and result in an income tax savings of \$4,500 ($\$18,000 \times 25\%$ —their annual tax rate). They will also avoid \$1,500 in capital gains tax for a total savings of \$6,000 (\$4,500 plus \$1,500).

REMAINDER INTEREST

But gifts of real estate do *not* need to be outright donations — they can be contributions of remainder interest. Remainder interest in this context refers to special provisions that allow you to donate a personal residence or a farm property to the Church, contingent upon your right to live in your home or use your farm for life.

Under this option, the amount of your charitable deduction is determined by your age at the time of the transfer and the value of the contributed property.



BARGAIN SALE

Another alternative that is especially suited to gifts of marketable securities and real estate is the so-called bargain sale. This arrangement is particularly attractive when the value of the property being considered as a gift is more than the owner can afford to donate.

A bargain sale, then, is merely the transfer of assets to a qualified non-profit organization — such as the Church — for an amount that is lower than the property's current fair market value. While you are likely to incur some capital gains tax in selecting this option, it will—more than likely—be offset by the charitable contribution deduction.

4. INSURANCE

Life insurance policies that are no longer needed make it possible for individuals of even modest means to make a substantial contribution to the work of the Lord. Gifts of life insurance often offer distinct tax advantages as well.

Normally, families purchase life insurance for the purpose of providing economic protection for dependents and loved ones. As parents grow older, their children grow up, go to college, marry and establish their own homes. Other assets grow. Eventually, the original reason for buying insurance is no longer as prominent.

You may wish to review your life insurance program with these factors in mind. It might be that a portion of your insurance holdings could be assigned to the Church or one of its agencies as the irrevocable beneficiary.

If a fully paid-up policy is contributed in this manner, its value—and, therefore, the amount of your charitable deduction—is determined by the policy's replacement cost. If a policy is not fully paid up, your deduction is approximately the cash surrender value of the donated policy.

A gift of life insurance normally qualifies for the maximum tax deduction, namely, 50% of your adjusted gross income. If you pay future premiums on a contributed policy, these payments are also fully deductible.

Because the proceeds go to the Church, there will be an eventual savings in any federal estate tax liability, state inheritance taxes, and administrative costs associated with the settlement of your estate.

EXAMPLE — When Don and his wife purchased their home over fifteen years ago, he took out a \$20,000 life insurance policy naming his wife as the beneficiary. Now that the mortgage is paid, Don no longer feels the policy is essential to his wife's welfare.

After discussing their financial arrangements, Don and his wife decide to contribute the policy to the Board of Benevolence for the benefit of Messiah Village. In sharing this information with their accountant, Don is pleased to learn that his donation of life insurance will enable him to claim a \$10,000 deduction on his next income tax return, an amount corresponding to the present value of his policy.

If he continues paying the annual premiums of \$650, he can also deduct these payments as charitable contributions. In addition to these benefits and the satisfaction of knowing that he and his wife are reaching out to help others in a meaningful way, Don learns that by completing the transfer, he will remove the full \$20,000 face value of the policy from his estate — thus saving future death rates as well.

5. PERSONAL PROPERTY

Gifts of tangible personal property used "to promote the worship of Almighty God and disseminate His Gospel" can also yield important tax savings for you. Almost anything can be donated — automobiles, furniture, books, paintings, antiques, coin collections, and so forth.

If the contributed property is related to the tax-exempt purpose of the organization to which it is transferred and has been held for longer than twelve months, the property's full fair market value may be deducted as a charitable contribution. In addition, any capital gains tax on the appreciation of the gift is eliminated.

For tangible personal property that does not qualify as a long-term asset, or is unrelated to the tax-exempt purpose of the organization to which it is donated, slightly different rules will apply in determining your income tax deduction.

6. GIFT ANNUITIES

You can also express your gratitude to God for His abundant blessings by establishing a charitable gift annuity agreement with the Brethren in Christ Church.

An agreement of this nature can be created by your transfer of money, securities or property to the Brotherhood in exchange for its promise to pay you and/or your designee(s) a *guaranteed income* for life. The rate of return is determined by your age(s) at the time of the gift. The older you are, the more generous the payout. For example:

SINGLE-LIFE GIFT ANNUITY RATES			
Age	Payout*	Age	Payout*
45	5.0%	70	6.8%
50	5.2%	75	7.7%
55	5.6%	80	9.0%
60	5.8%	85	10.5%
65	6.2%	90	12.0%

*Based on U.S. Rates. Persons living in Canada should contact the Canadian Director of Stewardship and Finance.

For IRS purposes, a gift annuity is considered part gift to the Church and part purchase of an annuity. You are entitled, therefore, to a generous charitable deduction in the year of the transfer. A substantial portion of your annual annuity payout will also be *tax free* for as long as you live.

Because the *full* payments will continue until the demise of the surviving annuitant, the yield on a multiple-life agreement is slightly lower than that of a single-life annuity.

If you contribute appreciated securities or property for a charitable gift annuity, you realize still another saving. For in addition to reducing the capital gains tax you would normally incur if you sold the asset, you can prorate the reportable gain over your life expectancy.

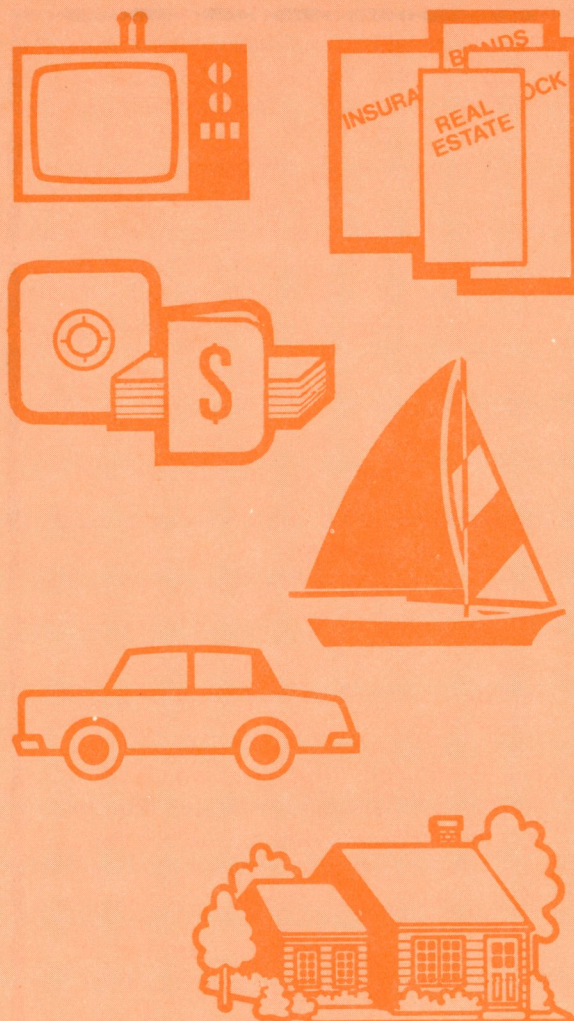
In most cases, the tax savings from your charitable deduction will more than offset any capital gains tax.

Gift annuities can also be used to provide income for loved ones when you are no longer here to care for them. This can be accomplished by naming yourself and someone else—such as your spouse—as joint income beneficiaries, or by specifying one or two other persons as the annuitants.

EXAMPLE — Esther, age 75, would like to provide scholarship aid for individuals preparing for pastoral service. She decides to transfer \$10,000 from a 5½% savings account to the Jacob Engle Foundation for a Gift Annuity Agreement, naming the Committee on Ministerial Training as the recipient of undistributed funds remaining at her death. What are some of her benefits?

- The yield on her investment is *increased* by 2.2% annually (7.7% instead of 5.5%).
- She is *immediately* eligible for a \$3,816 charitable deduction on her next income tax return (\$10,000 x 38.16%).
- Approximately \$535 of her gift annuity income will be tax free *each year* for the rest of her life.
- Future estate shrinkage and probate delays will be reduced.

NOTE — While Esther could have provided a gift for the Committee on Ministerial Training through her Will, *none* of the benefits shown above would have been possible. This illustrates the importance of proper planning in Christian stewardship.



AN INVITATION

The ministry of giving is a vital part of our Christian experience. For only as we realize that we are helping others does life take on meaning.

We trust this article will direct you to areas of giving that fit your personal financial program, help you to fulfill your desires in supporting the work of our Lord, and add new meaning to life.

You are invited to write or telephone the Commission or Stewardship and Finance if we can be of service or offer any additional counsel. You will not be obligated in any way. Direct your inquiries to:

Brethren In Christ Church
Commission On Stewardship And Finance
 7733 Hillcrest Avenue
 Harrisburg, PA 17112
 (717) 652-1034

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalms 24:1).

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

⁷Since January 1, 1978, assets must be held for longer than twelve months to qualify as long-term property and thus receive favorable tax treatment.

⁸The appreciation on short-term assets is not taxable. However, the charitable deduction is then limited to its original cost.

⁹For income tax purposes, it is generally better to sell property that has depreciated (or gone down) in value, claim the loss on your current tax return, and donate the proceeds from the sale to the Church.

¹⁰Under an alternate method, you may deduct up to 50% of your adjusted gross income and still retain the five-year carry-over privilege. However, in electing this option, you must reduce the value of the gift (for deduction purposes) by an amount equal to one-half of the appreciation of the contributed property.

The *COVENANT Newsletter* is provided, without obligation, as a stewardship service for the members and friends of the Brethren in Christ Church. Each issue of the *COVENANT* highlights one aspect of Christian stewardship. For example:

Fall Issue September, 1978	Wills and Estate Planning
Winter Issue December, 1978	Taxwise Giving Techniques
Spring Issue March, 1979	Charitable Remainder Trusts
Summer Issue June, 1979	Christian Family Budgeting
Fall Issue September, 1979	Life Income Agreements
Winter Issue December, 1979	To Be Announced Later

This service, as well as other Commission on Stewardship and Finance services, is designed to help you achieve your goals for yourself, your family and for Christ and His kingdom through the wise use of financial resources during life and the development of a Christ-honoring estate plan.

If you know someone who would like to receive a personal copy of the *COVENANT*, write to:

Carl E. Keefer, Editor
COVENANT Newsletter
7733 Hillcrest Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17112

MONEY: Curse or Blessing

God is concerned with how Christians handle their material resources. This truth is evidenced by the fact that the Bible contains over 700 direct references to money. Over two-thirds of all New Testament parables relate to this theme. It also has been calculated that one out of every six verses in the four gospels deals directly with this subject.

Unfortunately, Christians typically avoid discussions about God and money, often because they believe that money is unspiritual. Some even quote *I Timothy 6:10* as "Money is the root of all

evil," completely forgetting the preceeding four words — "For the love of . . ." — as if they are not even part of the verse.

But money itself is neutral. It is neither spiritual nor unspiritual; it is man's attitude toward it and the way it is used that determines its value. This neutrality is illustrated in the following lines from F. W. Boreham:

"Dug from the mountainside,
washed in the glen,
Servant am I or the master of men;
Earn me, I bless you;
Grasp me and hoard me,
a fiend will possess you;
Lie for me, die for me;
Covet me, take me,
Angel or devil, I am what you make me."

In the hands of an evil person, money is soiled. It can be used as a bribe, to seduce, to poison and to damn. But in the hands of a good person, it can be used to build churches, schools, hospitals, etc. It can also be used to feed the hungry and to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The four lessons we all need to learn about money and our relationship to it are: 1) how to make it; 2) how to spend it; 3) how to save it; and 4) how to give it. It is the fourth lesson that so many individuals never learn, thus missing the growth, the joy and the blessings that are reaped as we share of our resources with others.

For money is stored up energy and value; it is symbolic of our labors. When we give of our finances, we are really giving of ourselves. Money thus becomes the medium which enables laymen to participate in the great evangelistic and missionary task of the church.

When given out of gratitude, money has the potential for becoming as lovely as the grace of God.

***** STEWARDSHIP QUOTE

Money stands between more people and
their relation to God than any other thing.

- E. H. Hungerford

Giving Is For The Giver

Giving is one of the privileges that every individual *must* engage in if he or she is to find fulfillment and experience true happiness. God has so created us that we *must* share with others if we are to discover real joy in living. No other form of investment brings greater satisfaction or richer returns.

How tragic, then, that so many people in today's society have the philosophy that "to keep is to gain." They have the formula backward, for Jesus tells us that to keep is to lose: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (*Mark 8:35*). This truth is illustrated by the following story of:

TWO SEAS

In the little country of Palestine there are two small bodies of water. One is always fresh and pulsating with life. It has been known for centuries as the "fisherman's paradise."

Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it, and stretch out their roots to sip of its healing water. Children play along its shores.

The Jordan River fills this sea with sparkling water from the ranges of Mount Hermon. So it laughs in the sunshine. And men build their houses near it, and birds make their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The Jordan flows on south into another sea. But here there is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no birds, no childrens' laughter. The air hangs heavy around its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business.

What makes this difference in these neighbor seas? Not the Jordan River. Not the soil in which they lie; nor the country round about them.

There is only one answer: The first sea — the Sea of Galilee — not only receives water from the Jordan, but also releases it. It has an outlet. For every drop that flows into it, another flows out. The receiving and giving go in equal measures.

The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps for itself.

The first sea gives and lives. The other sea takes and keeps. It has no outlet; consequently, it is dead . . . the Dead Sea.

God never intended for the individual Christian to be a reservoir, daily storing up His blessings and favors for selfish use. It is only as we make ourselves channels through which God can convey His love and grace to others that we find plenty for ourselves and add real meaning to life.

The martyred Jim Elliot of Auca fame zeroed in on this timeless truth when he wrote: "He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep, in order to keep that which he can never lose."

A brief review of the Bible underscores this principle with solid scriptural teaching. Read God's promises to those who give of themselves and their possessions for His sake and the Gospel's:

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over..." (*Luke 6:38*).

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse ...saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (*Malachi 3:10*).

"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (*Proverbs 11:25*).

"...he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully" (*II Corinthians 9:6*).

What, then, does giving represent? . . . a burden or a privilege? And who benefits most? . . . God or the giver?

ON GIVING

"What, giving again?"

I asked in dismay.

"And must I keep giving
and giving away?"

"Oh no!" said the angel
piercing me through.

"Just give until God
stops giving to you."

—Unknown

Covenant

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This publication is presented as a stewardship service by the Brethren In Christ Church. Its purpose is to provide accurate information of a general and abbreviated nature only. For advice and assistance in specific situations, the services of competent counsel should be obtained.

BROTHERHOOD LOAN FUND ANNOUNCES 7½% CERTIFICATES

Effective January 1, 1979, the Brotherhood Loan Fund will pay 7½% interest on all new Stewardship Investment Certificates written for three years or longer. Interest on certificates written after this date will also accumulate at 7% (short-term certificates) and 7½% (long-term certificates), rather than the current rate of 5¾%. In addition, a 1% reduction in the rate of interest will be imposed on early withdrawals from certificates written after the above date. The three plans available to investors after January 1, 1979, are outlined below:

PLAN	THRIFT ACCUMULATION PLAN	STEWARDSHIP INVESTMENT CERTIFICATE (SHORT TERM)	STEWARDSHIP INVESTMENT CERTIFICATE (LONG TERM)
RATE OF INTEREST	5¾% Per Annum	7% Per Annum	7½% Per Annum
INTEREST PROVISIONS	Paid From Date Of Deposit To Date Of Withdrawal		
	Credited Quarterly	Accumulated Or Paid Semiannually	
LENGTH OF INVESTMENT	1 Day (Min.)	6 Months, 1 Year Or 2 Years	3, 4 Or 5 Years
ADDITIONS	Any Amount, Any Time	No Additions	
WITHDRAWALS	Any Amount, Any Time	A 1% Reduction In The Rate Of Interest From The Date Of Deposit On Amounts Withdrawn Before The Maturity Date. Accumulated In- terest On Certificates May Be With- drawn At Any Time <i>Without</i> Penalty.	

Current investors with 3, 4 or 5 years certificates written before January 1, 1979, may return their certificates prior to maturity and request new certificates in order to receive the higher rate of return. This offer to renew at the higher rate is available until April 30, 1979. If no request is received by the Brotherhood Loan Fund, the 7% rate will remain until a new certificate is written at the next maturity date. For information and a Prospectus, write to:

**BROTHERHOOD LOAN FUND
P.O. BOX 1136
UPLAND, CA 91786**

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS NEITHER AN OFFER TO SELL NOR
A SOLICITATION OF AN OFFER TO BUY THE INSTRUMENTS
DESCRIBED ABOVE. AN OFFER CAN ONLY BE MADE BY
PROSPECTUS.**

Peace Section Meets

To Serve the Present Age

Eber Dourte

Thirty persons representing various MCC constituent groups met at Hesston Mennonite Church November 30-December 1 for the semi-annual meeting of the Peace Section. Committee members heard reports from the Green Lake Conference on New Call to Peacemaking. The New Call idea was born among the evangelical Friends and brought together representatives from the Historic Peace Churches. It encouraged a renewal of the search for God's word about peace and lifestyle. Jesus blessed the peacemakers (Matt. 5:9) giving his followers a continuing agenda to be lived out in our troubled world. Findings from Green Lake indicate the need to strengthen the local base through peace education, and the proclamation of the peace witness among ourselves as well as in the larger evangelical community.

In the area of peace education, we were reminded that many of our constituents have their views formed more by the political ultra-right than by the prophetic word of Scripture. The Section's efforts at peace education include appropriate follow-up on the findings of New Call to Peacemaking. A new release, "Lifework" prepared especially for MCC constituent youth was introduced. This eight-page booklet deals with the biblical and historical basis of peacemaking. Six additional issues will be forthcoming in the next 16 months. They will deal with peace-related topics: "Peace and Justice," "Non-violent Action," "The Draft and the Arms Race," "The Theology of Action and The End of History," "Vocational Choices and the Challenge to Service," and "A Lifework Lifestyle." Our constituency should be hearing more about this very soon.

The Section spent considerable time discussing the World Arms Race and our peace witness. Two specific areas of concern were considered. First, the US is the major supplier of military weapons to other nations. In the last 8 years, we have increased our sales from 1 billion a year to 13.5 billion. Other areas of concern were our own stockpiling of weaponry and the development of more and more sophisticated weaponry.

Richard Barnett, president of "World Peacemakers" in

Washington DC, who was in government service in the Kennedy years, spoke in a public meeting in the Hesston Church. He indicated that in the next 10 years, the government expects to spend 1.8 trillion dollars for the arms race. That is as much as was spent in the last 33 years. Mr. Barnett spoke on the "Myths of the National Security." His findings are that the very nature of the deterrent theory is a fantasy. More weaponry doesn't mean more security. There is no defense for the large centers of population and the only hope of survival will be to strike first. The possibility of human error triggering World War III and a nuclear holocaust is very real.

This problem is of great magnitude. The Section approved a statement deploring the arms race and calling on our people to read so that they are properly informed; to organize study groups so members of congregations may be informed; and to write letters to members of congress and the President urging initiative in reduction in the arms race. We also had group discussions on the World Peace Tax Fund. This is seen as a possible alternative to having 50% of our income tax for armament and defense spending. There has been some discussion with legislators on this Fund as a possible alternative for persons conscientiously opposed to having their tax dollars go for defense. Specific action on this Fund has not been taken yet, but it is hoped that it will be gaining support.

Regarding the draft for military service, there is no new specific information. In November, Selective Service said they wanted to recommend to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a revival of the Draft. Whether it happens is uncertain. However some observers do believe there could be a revival of the registration of youth as a first step for possible emergency mobilization.

Reflection on these days in Peace Section sessions are sobering to say the least. Being the true People of God in our grossly complex, misguided and sinful world is a heart searching pilgrimage. Our security is not in structures nor in our tax dollars, nor in our sophisticated weapons. It is in our Lord Jesus Christ.

home. As the motive for a "culto de barrio" is evangelization, this service may also be held in an evangelical's home where, say, a spouse or parent may be unsaved. The rationale is that if the unsaved won't come to church to hear the gospel the church will go to them.

When I was first introduced to the concept of house services my first reaction was, "Oh no, just another service in a week that was already full of church services." But in time I saw how they could effectively be used for

evangelism and church growth.

A good illustration of this is the Santo Domingo Brethren in Christ Church. The lay leader of this congregation has been especially strong in advocating "culto de barrios." In a week's time, he and interested members of the church are involved in as many as three house services in the community. This of course is in addition to the regular scheduled church services. As a result the local church is experiencing growth. Well over half the congregation has come to know

the Lord Jesus through the influence of these home services.

"The "vigilia" and the "culto de barrio" are just two out of various practices of worship that make the Nicaraguan Brethren in Christ Church distinct from her North American brethren. Coming from a different culture one would expect her forms of worship to be different. But in spite of the differences, the Brethren in Christ worldwide are united in their goals for church growth and Christian maturity.

Four Yankees at Camp Kahquah

Four ladies from the Grantham, Pennsylvania, area had the privilege of attending the Canadian Senior Citizens Retreat held at Camp Kahquah, fall of 1978.

This camp is located in the bush and lake country of Ontario and is about a five-hour drive north of Toronto. It is located on Lake Ahmic and consists of 88 acres and 16 buildings one of which is a winterized lodge consisting of a kitchen, dining room, lounge, and dormitories.

Forty-two senior citizens met for worship, fellowship, and relaxation. E. J. Swalm advised us on "Growing Old Gracefully" and Jesse Steckley led us in Bible study. Ron and Marjorie Lofthouse were our excellent directors. Games, reading, handwork, quilting, exchange of that which was meaningful since retirement, boating, and fellowship were experienced. The lake gave us beauty when the sun shone and when it rained. The autumn foliage was at the height of its brilliant color.

The fellowship was refreshing. The "4 Yankees" renewed friendships and made new ones. The presence of the Lord was close and our praises to Him were heartfelt.

—Naomi Brechbill

On Being Committed

Donna Zook

"Are you a committed Christian?"

This is the question with which the Missions Committee at Cedar Grove challenged the congregation as they planned for the Christian Commitment Crusade. Attractive, thought-provoking posters were prepared and now and then one would hear exciting tidbits about the Crusade.


Now that the Crusade is history, we must admit that our commitment did need updating and strengthening. We thank God for prodding us in our dedication to him and his cause.

This was accomplished, first of all, by a buffet meal on Saturday evening as we entertained a team of eight from Fellowship Chapel, New York City. Following this good time of fellowship and food, the team challenged us with the movings of God at the Chapel, verified by living testimonies of those who had been touched by their efforts.

Sunday morning, Pastor Heidler preached under a heavy burden as he

spoke on "Personal Commitment." The Holy Spirit was faithful, as he always is, in revealing areas of need in each of us. On Sunday evening, Bishop and Mrs. Alvin Book reminded us of the joy and satisfaction one experiences when fully committed to God. Having served in Rhodesia as missionaries, where various tasks were asked of them, as well as being called to work at Fellowship Chapel, they related some of the costs of commitment, but how God always rewarded with His peace and contentment. More recently, they have committed themselves to serve the Allegheny Conference as Bishop and wife.

At the close of that service, some went forward, reaffirming their commitment. All of us were faced with the question "Am I a committed Christian?" If we were satisfied with our commitment at the outstart of the Crusade, we were not so sure at the close. But our hearts cried, "Yes, Lord!"



Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world's unreached millions will be the focus of NAE's 37th Annual Convention. Bringing together a unique cross-section of evangelical leaders from across the nation and the world, the 1979 convention will offer seminars, workshops and public sessions designed to challenge and direct attendees in the carrying out of Christ's Great Commission.

Write for information today.

**37th Annual
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March 6-8, 1979
Orlando, Florida**

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CHURCH NEWS

from page seven

Atlantic, cont.

at the **Holden Park** Brethren in Christ Church on Sunday evening, Dec. 10. At this service they shared with the congregation their recent visit to the church in Cuba. • The **Lancaster** congregation has organized a Single-Adults group which meets weekly in the pastor's study at the time of the Sunday school hour. **John Snyder** will be leading this group. • The youth from the **Manheim** congregation presented the Christmas play, "To All People" at the Christmas program on December 24. A candle lighting service followed the play. • A winter snow-camp was sponsored by the **Kenbrook Bible Camp** for high school youth on the weekend of Jan. 12-14. **Eugene Wingert** was the trip leader.

The **Manor** congregation sponsored a Christmas Eve Candelight Service from 7:00-8:00 on Sunday, Dec. 24. • The Christ's Crusaders of the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation presented the Christmas play entitled, "A Modern Christmas Carol" on Friday evening, Dec. 8 at **Messiah Village**. They repeated the play for their own congregation on Sunday, December 10. • **Pastor and Mrs. Robert Lehman** had Open House at the parsonage for members of the **Palmyra** congregation on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 31. • The **Perkiomen Valley** church conducted a "Second Step Forward," a campaign for capital funds, with Sunday morning, Nov. 12, designated as the Celebration and Commitment Service. A cash offering of over \$13,000 was received and an amount of over \$75,000 was pledged to be given over the next three years. **Ray Hock**, a student at Eastern Baptist Seminary, is assisting as student pastor of the **Perkiomen Valley** congregation.

A Christmas love offering was received by the **Pequea** congregation for **William and Mary Hoke**, missionaries to India. The **Pequea** congregation is Mary Hoke's home congregation. • Eighteen members of the **Refton** congregation attended "Praise Gathering" at the Convention Center, Indianapolis, Nov. 16-18. Following the Indianapolis meeting, they visited the **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, where their former pastor, **Dale Allison**, is presently pastoring. The **Refton** congregation observed the ending of the old year and the beginning of the new with a dinner concert in which Buddy Bowers and The Triumphants provided the evening program. • **Eugene Wingert** served as evangelist for a week of revival emphasis, Nov. 19-26, at the **Shenks Union Church** near Elizabethtown, Pa.

Skyline View congregation reported receiving 34 new members on Sunday morning, Dec. 3. This brings the total congregation membership to 218. Of the 34 members received, only 8 were received by letter of transfer. • An emphasis of the role of music in Christian worship was included in the Sunday morning worship service of the **Souderton** congregation, Nov. 19. **Emerson Frey** from the **Manor** congregation brought the morning meditation and then in the evening directed combined choir and congregation singing which included many from the Brethren in Christ churches in the Souderton area. The three choirs of the Souderton congregation presented a Christmas musical on Sunday evening, Dec. 17. **Paul and Gertie Witter** are the directors of these choirs.

Canadian

The Singing Edwards family assisted the **Bridlewood** congregation in celebrating the coming of the new year at a worship service on New Year's Eve. • **Pastor and Mrs. Robert Climenhaga** of the **Falls View** congregation invited the congregation to a "Christmas at the Parsonage" on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 10. The Open House was concluded by a time of carol singing. • **Alvin Winger** who served the **Heise Hill** congregation as a minister for 44 years and who also served in the Canadian Conference as a bishop, celebrated his 95th birthday on Nov. 17. He is presently residing in the Parkview Home in Stouffville.

Sunday, Nov. 26, was observed as Senior Citizens Day at the **Houghton** Church in which music was furnished by the Melody Makers and **Paul Nigh** served as the guest minister. Brother Nigh has served as pastor for nearly 40 years in the **Springvale** and **Cheapside** congregations. • The **Massey Place** congregation observed a Christmas Communion Service on Sunday evening, Dec. 17. The Sunday school department presented two Christmas concerts during the Christmas season to a combined attendance of over 500. • It has been announced that **Phil and Judy Keefer** and their family will be joining the pastoral staff of the **Rosebank** Brethren in Christ Church in the summer of 1979. Phil is presently studying at Messiah College. The **Rosebank** congregation has taken leadership in the starting of the new church in Kitchener which has been identified as the **West Heights** Brethren in Christ Church.

The **Wainfleet** congregation observed Senior Citizens Sunday on Nov. 26, with a potluck style meal. The guest speaker for the morning worship hour was **Earl Sider** from the **Cheapside** congregation. • The initial Sunday morning service at the **West Heights** Brethren in Christ Church was held on Sunday morning, Nov. 26. **Phil Keefer** and **Ronald Lofthouse** shared in the morning service with Rev. Lofthouse bringing the morning message. The attendance at this initial service was 77 in the Sunday school hour and 85 in the worship service. • The first anniversary service of the **Riverside** Church located on the Niagara Christian College Campus was held on Nov. 5, with 175 in attendance. **Walter Winger**, president-elect of Niagara Christian College was guest speaker.

Central

The adult choir of the **Amherst Church** presented the cantata, "Ring the Bells" on Christmas Sunday morning, Dec. 24. • Pastor and Mrs. Bedsaul Agee, **Bethel** (Merrill) congregation, held Open House at the parsonage on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 17. • The **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, is encouraging the members to read the Bible through in 1979. Daily reading guides are provided and recognition will be given to those who complete the reading. • The **Christian Union** choir joined with the Cedar Lake Church of the Brethren in the presentation of John W. Peterson's cantata, "The Story of Christmas." The presentation was given in the Cedar Lake Church on Sunday evening, Dec. 10.

On the Wednesday evening before Christmas, the **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Ohio, distributed baskets to a number of homes while others of the congregation went caroling. • The

Highland congregation has a book rack where Christian literature is sold. One-half of the profits from the book rack go to the congregation's library. • A record attendance of 110 persons joined in the Sunday morning worship, Nov. 19, when the **Lakeview** congregation held their annual harvest dinner. • **Ron Slabaugh**, pastor of the **Mooretown** congregation, presented a slide program to the congregation on Sunday evening, Dec. 10. The slides featured Christmas and winter scenes and pictures of various church events and persons that made them happen.

Robert and Carolyn Mann, recently returned from service in Rhodesia, were the guest speakers at the Sunday services, Dec. 10, at the **Nappanee** congregation. The congregation reached its budget commitments with the offering of Dec. 24, permitting the offering of Dec. 31 to be used for over and above budget items to be shared with General Conference agencies and for special projects within the congregation. • The Missionary Prayer Fellowship of the **Pleasant Hill** congregation was in charge of the evening service on Sunday, December 3. The cantata, "To Tell the Untold" was presented at the evening program. • Christmas Sunday morning was observed by the **Sippo** congregation in a service of communion. • A weekend revival, Dec. 8-10 was held by the **Valley Chapel** congregation with **Arthur Climenhaga** as the evangelist.

Midwest

An oyster and chile supper has become a tradition with the **Mountain View** Brethren in Christ Church as a part of the Christmas season. This year's supper was held on Wednesday, Dec. 13, followed by Christmas caroling and the packaging of candy. • The **Oak Park** congregational bulletin announces the safe arrival of **Carol Stottlemeyer** and his locating of a job. Stottlemeyers have come to the Oak Park congregation from the **Five Forks** congregation, (Pa.) to assist with the work in Des Moines.

The annual Christmas program for the **Rosebank** congregation included the cantata, "Down From His Glory." This was presented to the congregation on Sunday evening, Dec. 17, with a repeat of the performance on Wednesday evening, Dec. 20, at the Brown Memorial Home near Abilene. • A group from the **Zion** congregation journeyed to **Wichita** on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 26, to share with the new congregation there.

Pacific

Sunday evening, Dec. 17, was the occasion for the Christmas program for the **Labish** congregation. The Christmas drama, "The Little Flute Player" was featured at the program. **Henry Ginder**, former bishop of the Allegheny Conference, was the guest minister for a three-evening emphasis, Jan. 17-19. The **Red Country** church has extended an invitation to its present pastor, **Sam Hollingsworth**, to serve another term as pastor of the congregation. The pastoral family has accepted this call to a five-year term. • Two new congregational newsletters have started publication in the Pacific Conference. The **Open Bible Community** Church has named their newsletter *The Eternal Life Gazette* while *Outreach* is the title for the **Upland** newsletter. The **Waukena** church building was filled, including the balcony, for the installation of the new pastor, Jack Finley, on Nov. 19.

New International Version Bible

J. C. Wenger

The first manuscript English Bible was made by John Wycliffe and colleagues of Oxford University in the early 1380s and was revised by John Purvey, 1388. The first printed English Bible, made by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale, appeared in 1535—sixty-nine years after the German Bible was printed.

It was William Tyndale who set the style for the English Bible. All subsequent editions (1539-1970) basically did little more than tinker with the Tyndale wording. He was a most capable scholar and died as a martyr after he had translated and revised the New Testament, and translated about half the Old Testament. Coverdale simply finished and slightly edited his work.

The Tyndale tradition is represented by the following Bibles: Great, 1539; Geneva, 1560; Bishops, 1568; King James, 1611; ERV, 1885; ASV, 1901; RSV, 1952; and NASV, 1970. The King James Version, for example was not a *de novo* translation, but a revision of the Bishops Bible. It was made by a group of six committees, almost all Anglican as to faith.

In the past several centuries enormous strides have been taken in the field of textual criticism. A major event for the study of the Old Testament was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the New Testament

the progress has been even more pronounced. We now have an almost letter-perfect text of the New Testament. One need but compare the 25th edition of the Nestle Greek New Testament (1963) with that of the United Bible Societies (2nd printing, 1968) to see how they are almost identical.

The genesis of the NIV.

In 1956 the Christian Reformed congregation of Seattle, Washington, sent a communication to the synod of that church, urging that consideration be given to the preparation of a new version of the Bible. The petition was heard and ultimately a committee of five was studying the matter: Marten H. Woudstra, Andrew K. Bandstra, Bastiaan Van Elderen, John H. Stek, and Martin J. Wyngaarden.

In 1957 the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) also appointed a similar study committee. Those who served were: Burton L. Goddard, Earl S. Kalland, Herbert S. Mekeel, Stephen W. Paine, and Merrill C. Tenney.

By 1961 these two committees were meeting conjointly to study the feasibility and practicality of making a new translation of the Bible. On December 21, 1962, the Joint Committee went on record as favoring calling a "Translation Conference" to get wider counsel.

Two years later in a meeting at Nyack, New York, the Joint Committee asked Burton L. Goddard to arrange for such a Translation Conference. He did so, with the

backing of many church leaders who agreed that he could use their names as conveners of the meeting.

The meeting was held at Trinity College, Palos Heights, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The dates were August 26 and 27, 1965. This conference endorsed the preparation of a new version of the Bible. A Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) was then appointed: 15 were invited to serve. Some declined, others resigned later as the work became heavier, and two died, so that by 1978 only six of the original 15 were still serving; eight others had been appointed to CBT. (The committee is currently one short of its constitutional membership of 15.)

The first meeting of CBT was held at Nashville, Tennessee, December 29, 1965, in the Free Will Baptist College. CBT felt uncertain of the project at that time. Who would finance it? Consequently CBT called another meeting with church leaders and scholars from across North America to meet at the Moody Church, August 26 and 27, 1966.

This time an even larger group endorsed the project. Furthermore, Y.R. Kindberg, executive secretary of the New York Bible Society (older but smaller than the American Bible Society), and Morris Townsend, a Bible Society Board member, indicated to the officers of CBT that the Society would be interested in attempting to finance the preparation of the new version. It was 1967 before this arrangement was concluded, however.

The writer was a member of the Committee on Bible Translation of the New International Version Bible. He is a teacher at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. This article first appeared in the Gospel Herald and is used by permission.

And it was the spring of 1968 before a full-time executive secretary of CBT was hired. His name was Edwin H. Palmer, a former Christian Reformed pastor and a teacher at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

The project now began to make progress. The work was done on five levels: (1) A team of two to five scholars, regional, in character (that is, one team was in the Chicago area, another in southern California), met and translated a given book. (2) An Intermediate OT/NT Editorial Committee (IEC) then met and went over the team translation, line by line and word by word. (3) A General Editorial Committee (GEC) then went over the IEC manuscript with a fine-tooth comb. (IEC and GEC generally had five men each.) (4) English stylists such as Margaret Nicholson and Frank E. Gaebelien then polished the GEC manuscript. (5) Finally, the CBT of 15 (10 present was considered good!) approved the wording before it went to the printer. The chief problem was that each committee tended to feel that wisdom began with it! Nevertheless, this system of polishing, polishing, polishing, really paid off in terms of a manuscript which went to the printer in a readable, accurately translated, beautiful form. No man and no committee could have done what this system of repeated checking and polishing accomplished.

Most of the work of CBT was done since 1970, frequently in hard-working summer sessions in the Black Forest of Germany (1972), in the Cascades some 50 miles from Bellingham, Washington (1973), in Scotland (1974), in Athens (1975), in Spain (1976), and in Belgium (1977). The aim was to get away from telephones and other distractions, and to find board and room sufficiently cheaper than in America, to pay the plane fares abroad.

The aim: A new version.

The aim of CBT was to produce a completely new version, direct from the original texts of the Old and New Testaments in simple, clear, crisp English, with little Latin—just Anglo-Saxon English where possible. Some contrasts with the KJV will illustrate its style. The King James Version reads: "Let love be without dissimulation" (Rom. 12:9), but the

NIV has: "Love must be sincere." The KJV speaks of the "lust of concupiscence," while the NIV has "passionate lust" (1 Thess. 4:5). The KJV has: "In many things we offend all," while the NIV reads: "We stumble in many ways" (Jas. 3:2). The KJV has: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," while the NIV has: "It is God's will that you should be holy" (1 Thess. 4:3).

At times there was agonizing and sharp debate in this effort to find the best possible rendering, particularly if there was some question about the original reading. Isaiah 53:11 reads in the KJV: "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint could be translated: "Because of the suffering of his soul he will see the light of life and be satisfied." CBT first decided to follow that rendering. The next day the rendering was reconsidered. The views of F. F. Bruck of the University of Manchester were considered, also the suggestion of Brown, Driver, and Briggs (Hebrew Lexicon, p. 581), and the following was finally adopted for the text: "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied." A footnote was added: "Or (with Masoretic text) he will see the result of the suffering of his soul and be satisfied." There is also a footnote after "light of life" in the text; the footnote reads: "Dead Sea scrolls and Septuagint; Masoretic text omits the light of life." Thus the English reader can look over the shoulders of CBT and see why they adopted the reading they did, and in the footnote they can see another possible reading of the text.

It was the aim of CBT to make a thoroughly accurate and reliable translation of the original languages of Scripture. But what should be done if Isaiah repeats the nonsense syllables of children who were acting as his mimics? In Isaiah 28:10 the children cry: Sav lasav, sav lasav; kav lakav, kav lakav—syllables that seem to be meaningless imitations of the way the prophet of God harped on the divine law. After endless discussion the NIV finally settled on: "Do and do, do and do; rule on rule, rule on rule"—as a sort of dynamic equivalent. (It might have been just as good to put down the Hebrew syllables, as at least one version does, *The Jerusalem Bible*.)

The cryptograms of Jeremiah (Sheshach for Babylon, and Lebqamai for Chaldeans) were formed by taking each letter in the Hebrew in turn, counting how many spaces it was from the beginning of the alphabet, then counting that many spaces back from the end of the alphabet, and putting that letter down! (Jer. 25:26; 51:1, 41). The NEB is wrong in seeing textual corruption in Jeremiah 51:1; it is, instead, a letter-perfect cryptogram.

It is sometimes said that interpreters should just translate literally, not interpret. As a general rule, that is correct. But what about Hebrew idioms such as "uncircumcised" fruit? (Lev. 19:23). NIV says of such fruit, "Consider it forbidden."

Accuracy before rhythm.

CBT labored hard to attain something of the beauty and cadence of the KJV, but chose accuracy rather than rhythm if there was a conflict. Every translation was read aloud at least twice (a chapter at a time) as CBT members listened carefully. This was to test the version for public readability. (It was also checked with students in school.) Too many sibilants in a row were avoided. "Some men's sins" would almost make the reader hiss (1 Tim. 5:24); it reads in the NIV, "The sins of some men."

Passages of great familiarity, such as the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the like, were kept in as familiar form as the original allowed.

Each day was begun with fervent prayer, and the members of CBT became very close spiritually as the years rolled around. Illness, or capture by communists of a translator's daughter and her family (the Millers, children of Stephen W. and Helen Paine), were occasions of much intercession and support. Yet differences of judgment were sometimes occasions of tension, in spite of love! Fortunately, there were constantly new patterns of alignments in the translation debates, and no real cliques were formed.

It is the hope and prayer of CBT and all who worked on the project (over a hundred scholars) that English-speaking Christians will find the new version attractive and usable in both private and public worship and study, and in memorization.

For pastors, lay leaders, and the rest of us.

Each in his own tongue and own way.

Vitalizing the Prayer Meeting

George Verwer

How Should We Prepare?

By spending time in personal prayer.

By reading God's Word, especially on the subject of prayer and then by feeding on powerful books on the subject. There are over fifty books—use some of the powerful quotes from these books later in the meeting.

Mobilize as many as possible over a period of time to present short, specific requests from the mission fields both at home and abroad. Each missionary on special ministry should have someone who represents him in the prayer meeting. Avoid having more than five to ten minutes of requests before having at least some time in prayer.

Get hot items from the newspapers which will motivate the people to a sense of urgency. 1 Timothy 2:1 gives us clear teaching about the need for this.

Organize, when possible, some kind of visual aid that will help the people. Many mission groups have good slides, etc.

Sometimes, arrange for special speakers but communicate that most of the time will be for prayer. If you feel that they must bring a longer message, then extend the meeting . . . but don't cut down on the actual prayer time. Keep in mind that talking to God is more important than listening to man.

Try to keep a balance when it comes to the actual meeting. Keep these suggestions in mind. As you make these a priority, you will be able to add to this list:

Emphasize different aspects of prayer, especially praise, thanksgiving, worship and intercession. Have someone at the piano (or even with a guitar) who can help set the pace in leading the praise and worship. Music is very important and we should try and teach the people new songs of

praise. Make use of the Psalms. Young people especially will appreciate this emphasis.

After presenting some brief requests, it is good to break into groups of four to eight within the large hall. After five to ten minutes, let them stay in their groups but present some fresh requests. Of course, part of the time can be all together with different ones leading in prayer. Variety is important, and we must not be afraid to launch out and try new methods. For over twenty years I have been involved in leading prayer meetings in almost every conceivable situation. Some of these meetings have been only an hour or two and others have been for four to eight hours long.

Urge people to pray. Make them feel relaxed in terms of things like grammar and the theological content of their prayers. Urge people to pray who don't often pray . . . but don't embarrass people.

There must be balance between the Holy Spirit's spontaneous work and each person's helping to make the prayer meeting what it should be. Be patient and refuse discouragement, as people will not learn reality in prayer in a few months or weeks.

Try to have very brief reports on answers to prayer. Urge people to be world-wide in their vision. Make use of a good world map. Encourage people to write to missionaries for whom they are praying and give reports on specific answers to prayer as well as requests.

Exhort and teach your people from the Word of God about prayer. Point out some of the ways they can help kill the prayer meetings, which include:

- Praying too long at one time
- Preaching at people in their prayers
- Praying only for things pertaining to your own church
- Not changing anything from one week to the next
- Judging and looking down on people who pray differently or who lack ability in English or theology
- Not really believing or expecting any specific answers

Page three contains an article by Mr. Verwer concerning the prayer meeting. It should be read in connection with these suggestions and principles.

An Agenda for the 80's

a-gen'-da: plan or outline of things to be considered or done.

An important item in any deliberative meeting is a plan of what is to be considered and the direction to be taken. This usually calls for an agenda.

In the life of the church questions need to be asked and dealt with—questions which bear upon the mission and ministry of the church. We would call these agenda for the church.

Let me suggest two.

Understanding the Bible

Our church fathers had a very simple understanding of the Bible. It was God's Word and as such it was the source of truth and the authority for life. They were not so much concerned about theories of inspiration as they were about the Bible's authority. We, their children are more concerned about inspiration but more confused about its authority.

The "battle for the Bible" has more than one front. While evangelicals are involved in holding a strong position on inspiration there are other fronts which are under subtle attack and being overrun. While the liberals demythologize the Scriptures, removing the supernatural; evangelicals deculturalize them, weakening the authority and ability of Scripture to speak to life.

The Brethren in Christ have made great changes in the last four decades. We moved away from positions which for years had been firmly held on the basis of Scripture. In some of these moves—to a supported ministry and the departure from a uniform prescribed dress code—we found scriptural support for the change or the lack of scriptural support for the continued practice.

At the same time there have been other changes where, I believe, expediency was more determinative than the pressure of Scripture.

The biblical issue for the Brethren in Christ is not so much that of inspiration as it is authority and interpretation. Some questions which call for answers are:

1. What is the key or the touchstone to biblical interpretation?
2. What is the relation of the Old Testament to the New?
3. Is there or should there be a canon within the canon?
4. To what extent is the biblical teaching affected by the cultural settings in which the Scriptures were written?
5. What is the place of Christ, his work and his teaching, in the interpretation of Scripture?
6. What is the role of the church in interpreting Scripture?

Issues on which our church has for generations assumed that the Bible had a clear and certain word—divorce and

remarriage, the role of women in the home and church—are already before us. Other issues—marriage and homosexuality—will surely surface and will call for a position to be taken by the church.

The Meaning of the World

For 150 years the Brethren in Christ thought they knew what the *world* was. They sought to keep themselves "unspotted" from it by church regulations that identified worldly activities and prescribed Christian conduct.

This is no call to return to the isolation and proscriptions of those years. But as Carlton Wittlinger stated in his Conference Sermon, "If we are inclined to fault them [the early Brethren] for their tendency to see the world everywhere, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether we can see the world anywhere."

This question raised by Dr. Wittlinger calls for an answer. The Bible is unequivocally clear in its warning against the Christian loving the world and being "of it." I propose that this enemy is really unseen by us today, adding to the peril. We must come to understand the meaning of the term *world* when used in the sense of being contrary to God and a peril to the Christian.

The world's influence is unbelievably subtle. Malcolm Muggeridge uses the illustration we may well have heard in which he compares the Christian in the world to frogs in a tub of water. The water is gradually heated until it is boiling—all the while the frogs make no attempt to escape because they are unaware of the peril until too late.

I dare say that many of us today are going to places, engaging in activities, watching T.V. programs, and "being unshocked" by experiences which at one time in our lives we would not have gone to, engaged in, watched, or accepted. I am interested that so-called Christian T.V. stations show reruns of T.V. programs of which I suspect they would have been very critical when they made their initial appearance fifteen or twenty years ago.

But the *world* is not confined to entertainment. The concept of the two kingdoms, so central to our fathers' understanding of the church and the world, is no longer central in our understanding. The values of the world become the value of the Christian. The world's structures become our channels of action.

There is a world that God created and called good. There is a world he loved and for which he gave his Son. There is a world that is one of the triumvirate of evil and to which Christians are not to be conformed. It is this third "world" we need to identify.

The agenda items stated in this editorial are more than the individual Christian should be expected to handle. This is work for the church. It is a serious obligation of the church. It is also an urgent one.

The Contemporary Scene

The Religious Mix Of the 96th Congress

The Ninety-Sixth Congress will be just as Catholic as its predecessor, with Roman Catholic representation on Capitol Hill at the same all-time high: 115 House members and 13 Senators (up from a total of 111 in both houses ten years ago). And the U.S. Senate will have a record number of Jewish members—seven.

These are among the findings of the Illinois-based evangelical magazine *Christianity Today* in its latest religious census of Congress, published in the December 1 issue.

United Methodists are the next highest group, with 57 Representatives and 18 Senators (down from 60 and 20 respectively in the Ninety-Fifth Congress). Jewish representation has grown rapidly since the 1972 election, when there were 12 representatives and two Senators. The new congress has 30 Jewish members.

Other totals, with figures of the outgoing Congress in parentheses: Episcopal, 70 (65); Presbyterian, 60 (60); Baptist, 57 (55); Lutheran, 19 (16); United Church of Christ, 16 (22); Unitarian, 12 (11); Mormon, 10 (10); Disciples of Christ, 6 (5); Greek Orthodox, 5 (4). Fifteen denominations were represented by fewer than five, and 19 members of Congress (including three Senators) listed themselves as Protestants without specifying a denomination.

Catholics also lead the list of religious affiliations of Governors, with 12—a decrease of three from the last election. Presbyterians, with nine, are second-highest, followed by Episcopalians with eight—a 100 per cent increase since 1976—and Baptists with six.

Another clergyman was elected to Congress: Democrat William H. Gray III, pastor of the 3,000-member Bright Hope Baptist Church in Philadelphia. He joins several ordained incumbents reelected to the House: Catholic priest Robert Fr. Drinen of Massachusetts, United Methodist Robert W. Edgar of Pennsylvania, John Buchanan of Alabama (Southern Baptist), and delegate Walter Fauntroy of Washington, D. C. (Progressive National Baptist). Buchanan is a Republican; the others are Democrats.

The only ordained minister in the Senate is Republican John Danforth of Missouri, whose seat was not up for grabs this year. Danforth holds a degree from Yale Divinity School, as does Democratic Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, who lists no specific religious preference.

Statement on Biblical Authority Issued by Evangelical Scholars

The latest shot in "the Battle for the Bible" was fired by 284 evangelical scholars who drafted a document called The Chicago Statement on Biblical Authority at the conclusion of a three-day meeting.

Called by the year-old International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, the conference heard papers on such topics as "Christ's View of Scripture," "Higher Criticism and Biblical Inerrancy," "The Adequacy of Human Language," and "The Meaning of Inerrancy." Participants included Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, president of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia; Dr. James I. Packer, associate principal of Trinity College, Bristol, England; Dr. Robert D. Preus, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas.

The document which was issued by the conference participants consists of a preface, a short statement, 19 articles of affirmation and denial, and an exposition of several topics relating to inerrancy.

In the preface, conference participants state that "we offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word."

The exposition section of the document examines several criticisms that have frequently been made of the doctrine of inerrancy. It declares that "When total precision of a particular kind was not exposed nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed."

The document affirms that "the authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one," and maintains that "by authenticating each other's authority, Christ and Scripture coalesce into a single fount of authority."

The letter was signed by Bishop Leonard Auala, Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church; President Lukas de Vries, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa; Assistant Bishop James Kauluma, Anglican Diocese of Damaraland, Church of the Province of South Africa; Roman Catholic Bishop Rudolf Koppman, O.M.I., vicar apostolate here, and the Rev. B. J. Karuera, African Methodist Episcopal Church in Namibia.